



ENDING HOMELESSNESS 2023

The State of the
Supportive Housing System
in Santa Clara County



Supportive Housing System Components

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- Increases affordable housing supply, providing a path to long-term housing stability for people who are unhoused and helps avoid future occurrences of homelessness caused by extreme housing costs

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

- Helps individuals and families who are about to lose their housing to remain housed where they are or move to more sustainable permanent housing

OUTREACH

- Engages with people who are unhoused on the street, in parks and other public spaces, and in vehicles
- Acts as an access point for the Coordinated Entry System and for emergency shelter
- Locates people who have been referred to housing programs by the Coordinated Entry System

COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM

- Acts as a front door to the community's housing resources
- Matches people who are unhoused to the community's transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing programs

HOUSING PROBLEM SOLVING

- Engages people in conversations to identify creative solutions, unexplored options, and resources to quickly return to housing

HERE4YOU CALL CENTER

- Provides a single point of access to emergency shelter beds and centralizes emergency shelter referrals
- Offers immediate Housing Problem Solving support
- Acts as an access point to the Coordinated Entry System

INTERIM HOUSING

- Provides temporary housing for people who are unhoused and have been enrolled in a Rapid Rehousing or Permanent Supportive Housing program while they are searching for a permanent place to live

EMERGENCY SHELTER

- Provides a safe place to sleep for people who are unhoused
- Provides meals, showers, other basic needs services, and connections to community resources
- Acts as an access point to the Coordinated Entry System

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

- Provides temporary housing and services for people who are unhoused and seeking a more structured living environment, especially youth and veterans

RAPID REHOUSING

- Provides supportive services and temporary rental assistance to people who are unhoused
- Helps individuals and families obtain permanent housing and increase income so that they can remain housed independently

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

- Helps individuals and families with disabilities maintain permanent housing through long-term rental subsidies, connections to medical and behavioral health care, and other services

Letter from the County Executive & Acknowledgments

I am pleased to share our annual State of the Supportive Housing System Report, highlighting the advancements Santa Clara County made in 2023 toward our collective goal of ending homelessness. We are facing extraordinary challenges ahead, while at the same time our collective efforts to comprehensively address homelessness have more momentum than ever.

Last year was a record year for housing development in Santa Clara County. Supported in large part by the voter-approved 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond, but also leveraging unique partnerships, funding sources, and government-owned land, we saw the completion of construction on ten new developments with 978 units of deeply affordable and supportive housing. Construction started on another ten projects, three of which are on County-controlled land. Also in 2023, the Board of Supervisors approved funding for ten new affordable and supportive housing projects in the cities of Mountain View, San José, Santa Clara, and Palo Alto, which will result in 1,128 new apartments.

When all Measure A-funded developments are in operation, the County and its partners will have created new permanent housing opportunities for more than 17,000 people, with nearly half set aside for previously unhoused individuals and family members. Additional projects under construction will provide affordable housing for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and educator workforce housing.

While we celebrate the grand openings and groundbreakings of these new housing developments, we also must acknowledge the difficulties ahead. During the same year in which we permanently housed more people than ever, we saw a 24 percent increase in the number of people seeking homelessness assistance for the first time. This is another sign that the root causes of homelessness – the availability of affordable housing and economic factors including a significant wage gap – are stronger than ever.

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Our collective efforts are guided by the voices and leadership of people with lived experience of homelessness, as we work to sustain and expand our supportive housing system.

In addition to these significant root causes, key renter protections put into place during the pandemic, such as eviction moratoria and expanded financial assistance programs, have ended, leading to an increase in evictions and people experiencing homelessness.

This report provides a snapshot of the multifaceted efforts to address and end homelessness in our community. Under the leadership of the Board of Supervisors, the County and our many partners are guided by the goals and strategies laid out in the 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness, and we are constantly adapting our approaches given the dynamic nature of this crisis and our economic environment. Our collective efforts are guided by the voices and leadership of people with lived experience of homelessness, as we work to sustain and expand our supportive housing system. We are grateful for the support of the Santa Clara County community. Thank you for being a part of our collective work to end homelessness in Santa Clara County.

Sincerely,

James R. Williams
County Executive
County of Santa Clara

Acknowledgements

This report was compiled by Homebase, the Center for Common Concerns, on behalf of the County of Santa Clara Office of Supportive Housing.

Special thanks to Destination: Home for their partnership and contributions to the report, to the supportive housing system clients and providers who shared their stories, and to the many community partners whose tireless work to end homelessness in our community is highlighted in this report.

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Introduction

2023 was an unprecedented year of housing production and service delivery for our supportive housing system in Santa Clara County.



We housed a record-breaking **4,487 people**, a 29 percent increase over the prior year



978 units of affordable and supportive housing funded by the 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond completed construction



865 households received **Emergency Housing Vouchers** as part of the Heading Home campaign

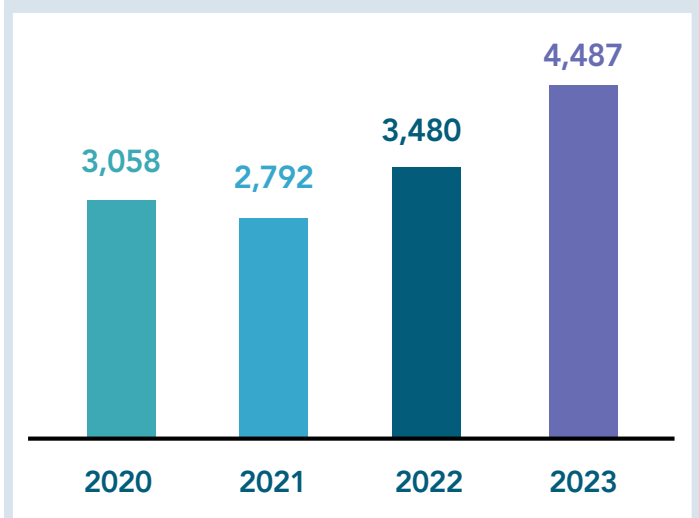


The Homelessness Prevention System expanded its capacity to nearly **2,500 households per year**, with new programs connecting households receiving other safety net services to homelessness prevention resources.

Despite these efforts, we still saw a 24 percent increase in the number of people becoming homeless for the first time. For every one household housed, another 1.7 became homeless. Nationwide, nearly half of all renters are rent-burdened and 26 percent of all renters are severely rent-burdened, an all-time high.¹ Among participants in the Santa Clara County Homelessness Prevention System, more than half of the households served were not earning enough income to cover their monthly rent. The expiration of pandemic-era tenant protections and financial assistance have exacerbated these challenges, with Santa Clara County experiencing the highest increase in evictions across the State in 2023.² Given these challenging structural factors, we must continue scaling up effective solutions to reduce homelessness, guided by the strategies outlined in our 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness.

This report highlights the many efforts to end homelessness and prevent new households from becoming homeless across our community. In 2023, we saw increased investment in homelessness prevention, temporary housing and emergency shelter, and housing production. The coordination and collaboration between key partners including the County, cities, the Santa Clara County Housing Authority, Destination: Home, people with lived experience, community-based organizations, and others grounded our collective work and progress. As we work to expand our system capacity, we must also work to ensure that it is sustainable and that we center lived experience in our system design and program operations.

PEOPLE HOUSED BY YEAR



¹ Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, *America's Rental Housing 2024*, https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/reports/files/Harvard_JCHS_Americas_Rental_Housing_2024.pdf

² Kuang, Jeanne. "Across California, eviction cases have returned to – or surpassed – pre-pandemic levels." *CalMatters*, November 20, 2023, <https://calmatters.org/housing/homelessness/2023/11/california-evictions-post-pandemic/>.

Affordable & Supportive Housing Development

The Office of Supportive Housing has led the development of deeply affordable and supportive housing throughout Santa Clara County, including implementation of the 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond and other projects leveraging many different funding sources and unique partnerships. These innovative models include developments on County-owned and County-controlled properties, transit-oriented developments in collaboration with the Valley Transportation Authority, educator workforce housing, affordable housing for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and affordable and supportive housing for transition-age youth who are current or former foster youth.

2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond

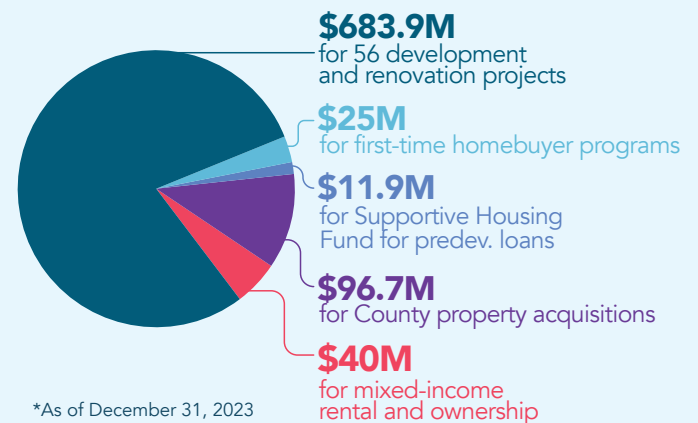
Passed by the voters in November 2016, the landmark \$950 million Measure A Affordable Housing Bond (Housing Bond) provides a crucial source of funding for the development of permanent affordable and supportive housing for extremely low-income and very low-income households, including those exiting homelessness. The County's Office of Supportive Housing is leading efforts to increase the supply of housing by funding and spurring the development of housing for low-income households with a prioritization for the poorest and most vulnerable residents who are disproportionately impacted by the lack of affordable housing. As of December 2023, the County has supported the development of 6,619 housing units of which 3,015 are set aside for homeless individuals or families, with a record number of projects completing construction in 2023.

A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR

2023 was an unprecedented year of progress for the implementation of the Housing Bond and other funding sources.

- 10 developments completed, totaling 978 units
- Started construction on 10 developments, including 3 on County-controlled land totaling 976 units
- Approved funding for 10 new Measure A-funded developments, totaling 1,128 units

\$857.6 MILLION COMMITTED*



YEAR 7 IMPLEMENTATION

\$696,635,399 IN MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT APPROVED

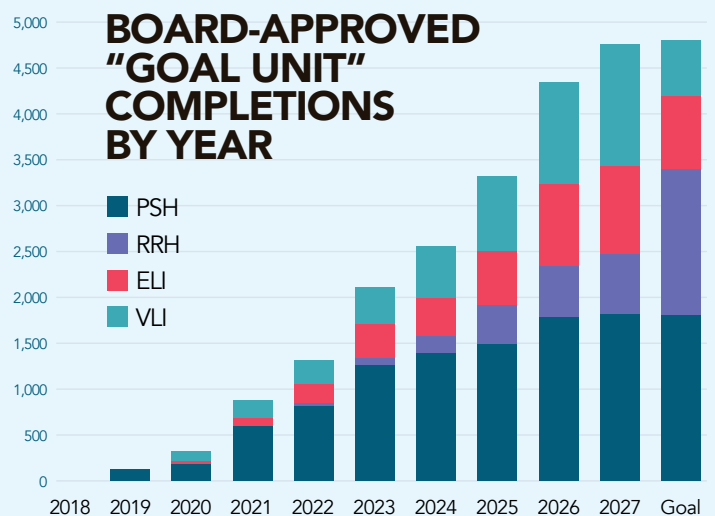
10 CITIES | **5,127 NEW APARTMENTS**

689 UNITS RENOVATED

\$25 MILLION
FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER PROGRAM

56
HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

*As of Dec. 5, 2023. The implementation update does not include County acquisitions.



El Camino Real Affordable Housing Development – Palo Alto

El Camino Real Affordable Housing Development is located at 3001 El Camino Real Multifamily Project in Palo Alto. The Board of Supervisors approved funding for the development in December 2023. The project includes 129 units on a 1.14 acre site and is being developed by Charities Housing. Thirty-two units will be rapid rehousing (RRH) units for homeless individuals and families with special needs, 30 units for households earning up to 30 percent of the area median income (AMI), and 65 units for households earning up to 50 percent AMI. The building will include ground level parking, on-site resident services, a community room, a second-floor courtyard, a barbecue area, and a secured bike storage room. The project is located close to shops and businesses on California Avenue, as well as the California Avenue Caltrain station.



Completed Construction in 2023



Mesa Terrace, San José
Developer: Eden Housing
Units: 46



Sango Court Apartments, Milpitas
Developer: Resources for Community Development
Units: 102



Page Street Studios, San José
Developer: Charities Housing
Units: 82



Agrihood Senior Apts, Santa Clara
Developer: The Core Companies
Units: 165



Villas at 4th, San José
Developer: PATH Ventures
Units: 94



Monroe Commons, Santa Clara
Developer: Freebird Development Company
Units: 65



Immanuel-Sobrato Community, San José
Developer: Midpen Housing
Units: 108



The Meridian, Sunnyvale
Developer: Related California
Units: 90



Vitalia Apartments, San José
Developer: Affirmed Housing
Units: 79



Blossom Valley Senior Apartments, San José
Developer: Charities Housing
Units: 147

Developing Housing on Publicly Owned Land

Educator Workforce Housing

231 Grant Avenue, Palo Alto

Developer: Abode Communities and Mercy Housing



Developed in partnership with Meta and five local school and community college districts, the 231 Grant Avenue project will include 110 affordable rental apartments for teachers, school employees, and their families. The project is being developed on land owned by the County of Santa Clara, one of the County's many strategies for increasing and diversifying the supply of affordable housing.

Transit-Oriented Development: Partnership with Valley Transportation Authority

The County has worked closely with Valley Transportation Authority to leverage opportunities for affordable and supportive housing development near transit stations. Through a Memorandum of Understanding approved in 2020, the County and the VTA agreed to share costs for predevelopment activities at four VTA-owned sites. All four sites have developers, and the projects together will add more than 480 units and 45 for-sale homes to the county's affordable housing inventory.

Housing Development for Intellectually/Developmentally Disabled Community

Mitchell Park Place, Palo Alto

Developer: Eden Housing



Another development leveraging County-owned land, Mitchell Park Place will have 50 units, half of which are set aside for individuals and families with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as onsite programs and services provided by AbilityPath. The development is conveniently located near transit, shopping, schools, a park including the Magical Bridge all-inclusive playground, and a library. This is one of several projects using funding pursuant to the Board of Supervisors' direction to identify \$40 million for the development of affordable housing for extremely and very low-income people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



Winchester Station, Campbell

Developer: Related Housing & PATH Ventures
Units: ~90



Berryessa Transit Center, San José

Developer: Affirmed Housing
Units: ~195



Capitol Station, San José

Developer: Midpen Housing
Units: ~203

Housing for Transition-Age Youth

The HUB/Parkmoor Community Apartments, San José

Developer: Abode Housing Development



The Office of Supportive Housing is partnering with Abode Housing Development to develop 81 affordable rental units, including units for transition age youth, and The HUB, a youth-led community center dedicated to supporting current and former foster youth. The project is located on County-owned land at the intersection of Parkmoor and Meridian avenues in San José.



Branham Station (Concept), San José

Developer: Charities Housing
Units: ~45 for-sale homes

Homelessness Prevention System

Homelessness is fundamentally a housing problem, and rents have long been out of reach for the lowest-income households. Launched as a pilot in 2017 with \$1.6 million in annual funding and the capacity to serve 215 households, the Homelessness Prevention System has grown to an annual budget of approximately \$30 million and capacity to serve nearly 2,500 households.

The Homelessness Prevention System provides critical and flexible assistance to households at imminent risk of homelessness through temporary financial assistance, legal support, and case management and other services. The system has proven extremely effective in preventing the trauma and dislocation of homelessness for thousands of households in Santa Clara County. While receiving prevention services, 94 percent of households remained stably housed. Two years after leaving the program, only seven percent of households became homeless.

The evidence from Santa Clara County's first randomized control trial on homelessness prevention through the University of Notre Dame's Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities has proven that targeted financial assistance is a highly effective intervention in preventing homelessness. Households receiving financial assistance through HPS were 81 percent less likely to become homeless within six months of enrollment. Twelve months following enrollment, those not receiving financial assistance were three times more likely to experience homelessness.

In 2023, the County launched two new homelessness prevention strategies in partnership with the Social Services Agency and the Behavioral Health Services Department to help beneficiaries of these services who are at risk of becoming homeless. This effort is consistent with the strategy to ensure that people accessing safety net services have the support they need to obtain and maintain housing. This fiscal year we have invested \$3.25 million in homelessness prevention to target households who are receiving services through the Behavioral Health Services Department and experiencing their first episode of psychosis, with the capacity to serve 250 households annually.

WHILE RECEIVING PREVENTION SERVICES



94% of families remain stably housed

AFTER LEAVING THE PROGRAM TWO YEARS LATER



Only 7% of families became homeless

Average financial assistance \$7,397

SERVING ALL OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Map locations: PALO ALTO, MOUNTAIN VIEW, LOS ALTOS, SUNNYVALE, MILPITAS, SANTA CLARA, SAN JOSE, CUPERTINO, SARATOGA, LOS GATOS, MOREAN HILL, GILROY.

Legal Support

- SACRED HEART COMMUNITY SERVICE
- LifeMoves
- St. Joseph's Family Center
- HEALTH • HOME • HEART West Valley Community Services
- HOMEFIRST
- Law Foundation OF SILICON VALLEY
- CSA Community Services Agency
- THE SAVANNAH ARMY
- Sunnyvale Community Services
- Amigos de Guadalupe Center for Justice & Empowerment "Connecting resources to people"
- Housing Choices
- FAMILY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Domestic Violence Advocacy Consortium

- ICAN
- LATINAS CONTRA CÁNCER
- oocj
- Community Solutions
- NEXT DOOR
- eliminating racism empowering women ywca Silicon Valley

Emergency Shelter & Crisis Response

The crisis response system provides temporary housing and emergency shelter, support for basic needs, and connections to resources and supports with the goal of getting individuals and families into stable housing as soon as possible. With an infusion of resources, countywide temporary housing and shelter capacity has increased by 44% since 2020 to a total of 2,717 units, with 384 more in the pipeline. Approximately 7,400 people accessed temporary housing and emergency shelter in Santa Clara County during calendar year 2023.

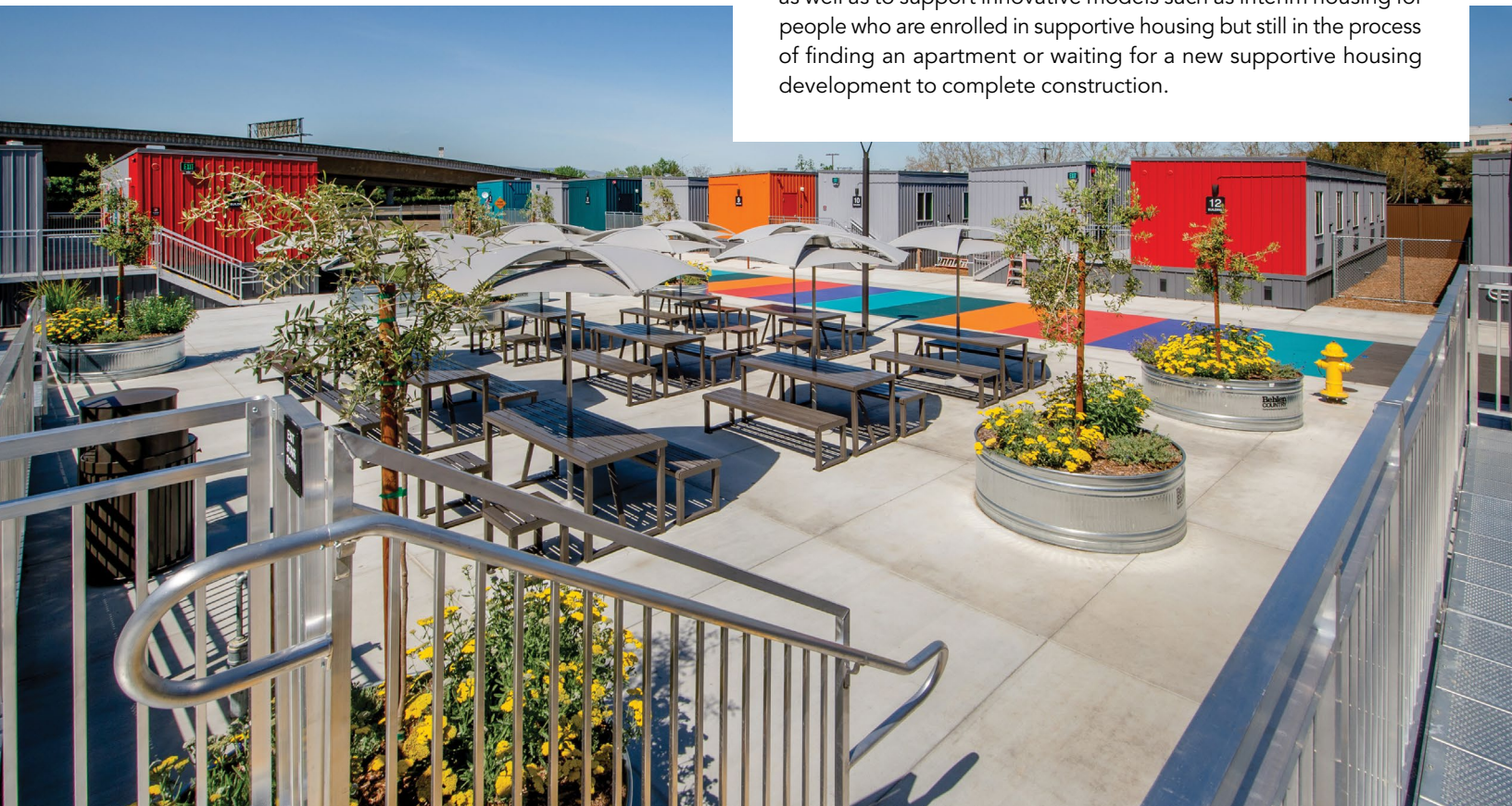
The effort to expand temporary housing and shelter capacity has also included a focus on improving experiences for individuals and families participating in these programs. In order to streamline access to resources, the Here4You Hotline provides centralized referrals to temporary housing programs, as well as referrals and linkages to community resources based on client needs.

The City of San José has invested significant resources in expanding and improving temporary housing and emergency shelter programs, including ongoing engagement with people with lived experience to inform program design and operations. The City partnered with the Lived Experience Advisory Board of Silicon Valley to inform the development of the Guadalupe Gardens site near downtown San José. Learnings from this partnership include the importance of private, lockable units, the need for resources to care for people of all abilities, and the need to provide person-centered services to provide people with dignified temporary housing.

44% increase in temporary housing and shelter capacity since 2020





Emergency housing and temporary shelter programs are a critical component of the supportive housing system countywide, but their success

is dependent on the availability of permanent housing resources, including subsidized and deeply affordable housing. The County, cities, the Santa Clara County Housing Authority, and other partners are continually working to increase the supply of permanent housing, as well as to support innovative models such as interim housing for people who are enrolled in supportive housing but still in the process of finding an apartment or waiting for a new supportive housing development to complete construction.







Heading Home Campaign: No More Families Living on Our Streets

The Heading Home campaign launched on October 5, 2021, with the goal of reaching “functional zero” for unhoused families by 2025, meaning that the number of housing placements for families is greater than the number of families entering homelessness. The campaign includes four primary strategies:

-  **Leveraging Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) for literally homeless families**
-  **Expanding homelessness prevention strategies**
-  **Expanding Rapid Rehousing Programs**
-  **Creating new permanent affordable and supportive housing units**

This unprecedented marshaling of resources to address and prevent family homelessness has yielded significant results. From the start of the campaign through the end of 2023:

-  **1,550 families with children** (more than 5,000 people) obtained permanent housing
-  The Homelessness Prevention System served **2,313 families**
-  **774 new units** of affordable and supportive housing for families opened or started construction
-  **848 additional family units** obtained funding and will open by 2027



Over the next year, the focus of the campaign will be to address the findings from the first two years of implementation, including the need to continue investment in the production of affordable and supportive housing, increasing homelessness prevention programs, connecting families to appropriate housing services, and the expansion of temporary shelter resources for families to meet the need for emergency options while families search for permanent housing.

Supportive Housing System Highlights: Youth & Young Adults

Youth Action Board and Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program

Established in July 2021, the Youth Action Board (YAB) is a community of youth and young adults with lived and living experience of homelessness and housing instability focused on creating collaborative solutions to homelessness. The YAB is run by 15-20 members and is an established key partner in ending youth homelessness in Santa Clara County. They advise the County of Santa Clara on issues that impact youth and young adults experiencing housing instability, such as lack of steady and consistent household income, involvement with foster care, and involvement with the juvenile and criminal legal system. The YAB drives forward the implementation of youth-focused housing programs and services funded through the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP).

Since Santa Clara County was awarded nearly \$12,960,000 in YHDP funding in October 2021, the YAB has partnered with both the County and YHDP grantees to continuously strengthen programs. The YAB has supported a variety of grantees with diverse levels of experience with federal funding over the first two years of program implementation. Through this partnership, the YAB has educated and empowered these agencies to implement person-centered best practices, such as prioritizing youth choice, centering authentic youth collaboration and leadership, and promoting genuine, supportive relationships.

Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program Grantees

- STAR Programs: \$2,613,546
- Razing the Bar: \$691,554
- Bill Wilson Center: \$2,916,635
- Community Solutions: \$2,896,212
- Covenant House: \$3,841,944

The YAB's governance structure includes a YHDP subcommittee dedicated to collaborating with grantees and soliciting feedback from youth currently receiving housing and services. Subcommittee members attend regular check ins with YHDP grantees to hear about their progress in housing youth and share information back to the YAB. This subcommittee and the larger YAB provide invaluable recommendations for how to best serve and support youth experiencing homelessness, such as hiring staff with lived experience who are best prepared to assist youth in navigating their housing journeys.

The YAB also organizes site visits with YHDP grantees to assess progress in serving youth participants, troubleshoot issues, and collaborate on program design and service delivery. For example, YAB members visited and had breakfast with Bill Wilson Center program members to discuss the progress of their YHDP Program and collaborate on ways to best support participants. Additionally, YAB members participated on an interview panel for Covenant House staff and provided feedback on potential hires.

YAB input on program enhancement directly results in improving the quality of life for youth clients. Maria Vans, YAB member and YHDP Subcommittee Coordinator stated, "Hearing, 'We housed this person today!' is the most rewarding. For me, that's really good news and I feel very happy when programs mention that." The YAB plans to continue providing guidance and working closely with YHDP grantees and program participants to ensure that youth have housing opportunities that support their stability and nurture their long-term aspirations.





The HUB/Parkmoor Community Apartments

In May 2021, the Board of Supervisors selected Abode Housing Development (formerly known as Allied Housing) to develop a new HUB youth service center and residential housing on Parkmoor Avenue in San Jose. This new development will have up to 81 units of affordable and supportive housing, including units for transition age youth.

The five-story building, which began construction in November 2023, will feature four floors of housing above 17,000 square feet of ground-floor space called The HUB, a youth-led community center dedicated to supporting current and former foster youth ages 15 to 24. The HUB, which was founded by current and former foster youth and has operated for years from a different location, will relocate to the ground floor of this new complex. It will house service organizations, provide activity spaces for youth, and serve as a safe, welcoming center with services by youth peers and other caring community members.

The YAB and other youth and young adults with lived experience played and continue to play a vital role in the development of the Parkmoor HUB project. YAB members and others helped shape a robust community engagement process, including visioning sessions and multiple design workshops focused on various components of the community spaces and residential development, including interior and exterior design, art, and accessibility. The Parkmoor HUB is expected to complete construction by Summer 2025.



Supportive Housing System Highlights: Centering Lived Experience in System Transformation

Coordinated Entry Redesign

The Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing is spearheading a transformative initiative in partnership with persons with lived experience of homelessness with the goal of connecting unhoused people to vital housing opportunities through a more streamlined, equitable, and person-centered to coordinated entry.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that Continuums of Care establish and operate a coordinated entry process to make consistent decisions from available information to efficiently and effectively connect people to interventions that will rapidly end their homelessness. The redesign process aims to maximize the fairness and efficacy of Santa Clara County’s process while minimizing any stigmatizing or traumatizing effects on participants.

The Coordinated Entry System redesign process launched in 2022, with the formation of a Prioritization Committee of over a dozen persons with diverse identities and lived experiences of homelessness. This dedicated group established a guiding vision for an equitable, effective, and efficient Coordinated Entry System in Santa Clara County. Their innovative and intentional work culminated in the creation of nine core principles designed to protect vulnerable subpopulations, address racial disparities, honor veterans, and empower clients in their housing and service choices.



One important piece of the redesign process was that we spent a lot of time focusing on how the new assessment can address inequities and meet the needs of groups overrepresented in Santa Clara’s homeless population.

– Ed Howard, Prioritization and Implementation Committee Member

CORE COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM REDESIGN PRINCIPLES



Center client choice regarding housing and services



Prioritize racial/ethnic groups over-represented in the homeless population



Protect people who may not be able to protect themselves



Prevent physical harm and prioritize those who have experienced it



Honor veterans



Facilitate a fresh start for people impacted by the criminal legal system



Prioritize chronically homeless persons



Protect people who struggle with Activities of Daily Living and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living



Prioritize individuals who are living unsheltered

In a landmark collaboration, Prioritization Committee members were joined by a diverse group of agencies from the Continuum of Care to form the Implementation Committee tasked with translating this vision into action – 2023 marked a significant breakthrough with the completion of a new, pioneering housing assessment process, set for community pilot testing. Over the course of 2024, the Office of Supportive Housing will lead a pilot study to assess and refine this inventive approach, ensuring it effectively meets the needs of unhoused households and reverses disparities present in the Santa Clara County homeless population.

KEY COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM REDESIGN PARTNERS

Over a dozen persons with lived experience of homelessness



Amigos de Guadalupe
Center for Justice & Empowerment
"Connecting resources to people"



LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS INTEGRATION COMMITTEE



SANTA CLARA COUNTY REENTRY SERVICES



SANTA CLARA COUNTY YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD



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What I appreciated is that we created enough space and trust for people with lived experience to be able to call providers in and to hold us accountable to develop a person-centered assessment.

– Laura Foster, Implementation Committee Member

“

I’m hoping this new assessment lowers barriers and makes unhoused people feel like they have value. And I hope that providers who administer the assessment will feel that they have been heard and will find the new assessment simpler and easier.

– Jenn Lopes, Implementation Committee Member

“

The new assessment will work better for the people who need it because it was designed by people with lived experience of homelessness, individuals who are closest to the problem and closest to the solution.

– Benaifer Dastoor, Implementation Committee Member

Supportive Housing System Improvements

The Community Plan to End Homelessness includes several strategies to support creating a state-of-the-art supportive housing system. Prior to 2015, there were 247 site-based supportive housing units in Santa Clara County. Since 2015, the County and its partners have increased supportive housing capacity by 3,026 units with another 1,126 in the pipeline. With our community’s significant investment in permanent housing development, we have seen rapid growth in our system. Most of the county’s site-based housing has opened in the last three years.

Over the next year, OSH, in partnership with Destination: Home, cities, the Santa Clara County Housing Authority, the development community, nonprofit services providers, tenants, persons with lived experience of homelessness, property managers, and local neighborhoods will work together to develop a consistent set of standards for site-based permanent housing programs that incorporate best practices while addressing specific local needs of the community.

Leading with Lived Experience

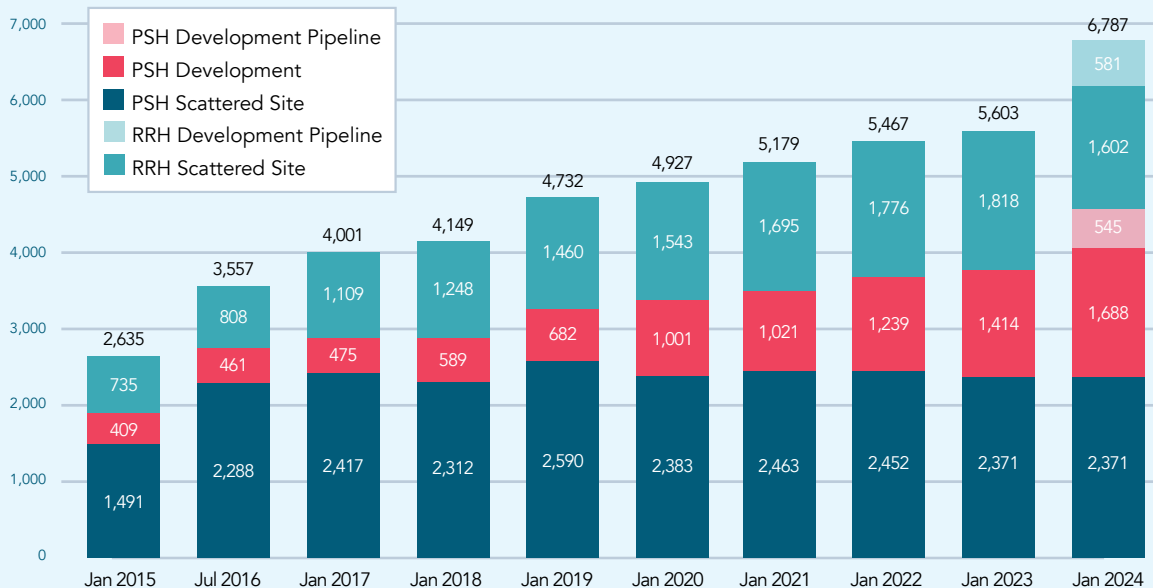
Central to the Community Plan’s goal to create a state-of-the-art supportive housing system is prioritizing and ensuring that the input of people with living and lived experience of homelessness is meaningfully incorporated into program design, operation, and systemwide funding decisions.

One significant way in which OSH has implemented this vision is by launching a survey process to gather, analyze, and address the feedback of federally-funded Continuum of Care (CoC) housing program participants.

Every year, projects serving individuals who have experienced homelessness are evaluated and ranked as they compete to renew their CoC funding. For the last two years, Santa Clara County has set a national example by placing this funding decision-making power in the hands of a panel comprised entirely of individuals with lived experience of homelessness. Reflecting on their experiences, these panelists suggested that directly asking the participants themselves would be more informative than reading narratives composed by grant writers.

As a direct response to this recommendation, OSH developed a first-of-its-kind process for CoC-funded program participants to directly influence funding determinations through a participant satisfaction survey led by the Supportive Housing Leadership Group (SHLG). The SHLG is comprised exclusively of members with prior or current experience living in supportive housing programs. With the benefit of their own experiences as residents, SHLG members have developed and refined the survey and its implementation plan. The SHLG has also been instrumental in analyzing survey results and developing recommendations to strengthen CoC program staff communication and service provision.

GROWTH IN HOUSING CAPACITY (UNITS), 2015 TO 2024





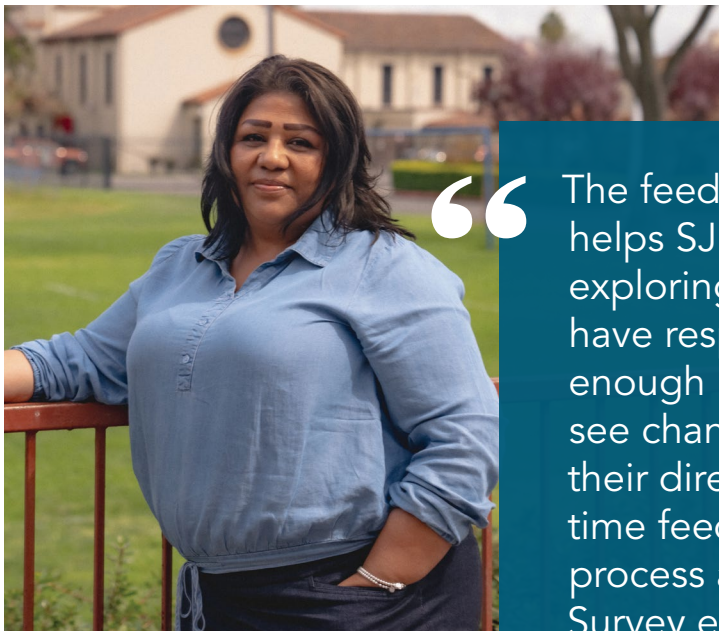
Shadia Amador, a SHLG member, shared that her favorite part of this effort is visiting program sites and administering surveys in person. Shadia reflected on the importance of providing peer support in administering these surveys:

“ Nobody can sympathize, empathize, or relate to the community we are trying to help in the way people with lived experience can.

– Shadia Amador, Supportive Housing Leadership Group

The survey pilot concluded in April 2023 with vital input from 394 households across the sprawling CoC community. The 2023 survey launched in November 2023 and successfully reached over 570 residents across 26 sites.

One of the agencies that has been evaluated for the past two years has been St. Joseph’s Family Center (SJFC), which runs two CoC-funded permanent supportive housing programs out of South County. SJFC is very proud of their high resident participation rates in the CoC Participant Satisfaction Survey and hopes residents will continue to grow in their comfort around providing honest feedback.



“ The feedback shared through these efforts helps SJFC revisit and take a deeper dive into exploring areas that the organization may not have responded to fast enough or intensely enough in the past. For participants to truly see changes in the system, we need to hear their direct feedback and it can’t just be one-time feedback. This needs to be an ongoing process and the CoC Participant Satisfaction Survey efforts are building a rigor and cadence to that continuous process.

– Veronica Guzman, St. Joseph’s Family Center

In the coming years, CoC-funded agencies will develop and implement action plans to strengthen and continuously improve their programs based on the invaluable insights gained from the SHLG’s findings and recommendations.

Community Plan to End Homelessness Implementation Update

The systemic factors driving homelessness are stronger than ever, and forcing more of our community members onto the streets and into shelters every day. The 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness guides our community's collective work to reverse the current growth in homelessness and bring us closer to our goal of ending homelessness in Santa Clara County. We are forging new partnerships, changing systems, and investing strategically to accomplish meaningful progress, however, we must continue to scale up these effective solutions to reduce overall homelessness in our community.

The Community Plan is organized around the following three core strategies:



STRATEGY 1

Address the root causes of homelessness through system and policy change



STRATEGY 2

Expand homelessness prevention and housing programs to meet the need



STRATEGY 3

Improve quality of life for unsheltered individuals and create healthy neighborhoods for all

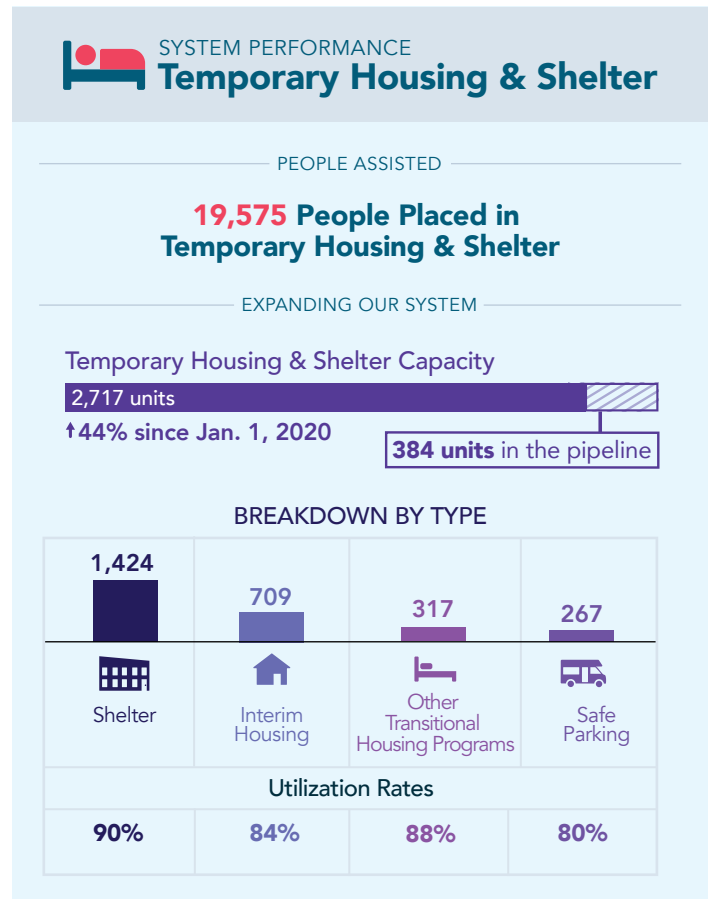
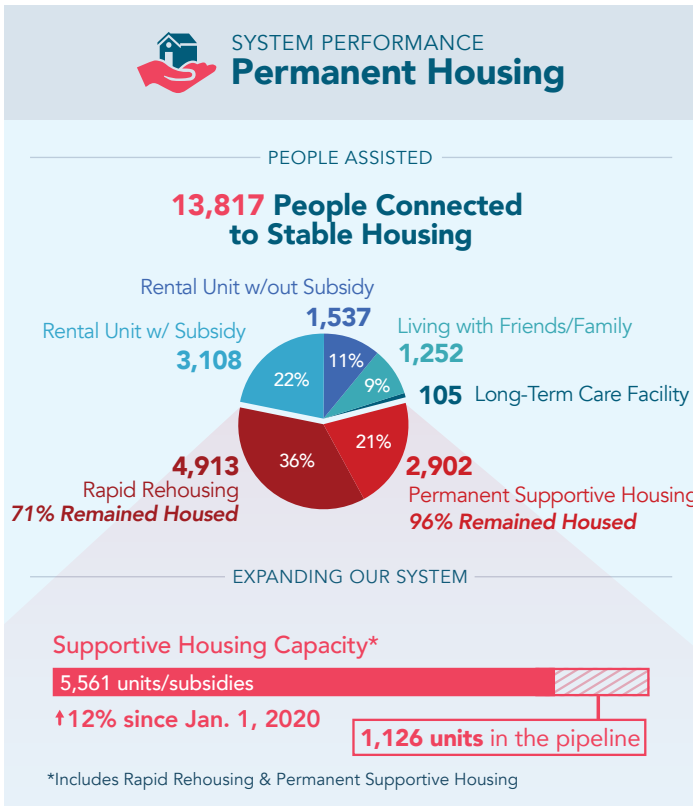
The Community Plan set ambitious targets to achieve by 2025 and thanks to the dedication and commitment of several public and private partners, here is our progress to-date against these bold goals:

Housing 20,000 people through the supportive housing system:

Since 2020, our system has helped connect **13,817** unhoused individuals to permanent housing. In the past year alone, nearly **4,500** people were housed – a **29 percent** increase from 2022 and the most ever in a single year.

Increasing Temporary Housing & Shelter Options

The Community Plan set the ambitious goal of doubling temporary housing and shelter capacity by 2025 to better meet the needs of our community and further reduce the number of people sleeping outside. Our current system capacity includes **2,717** units of temporary housing and shelter, up **44 percent** since 2020 with more units coming online over the next year.



Expanding the Homelessness Prevention System and other early interventions to serve 2,500 people per year:

Our system has expanded homelessness prevention assistance to more than **28,235** at-risk people, with an annual capacity of **2,487** households. Ninety-five percent of households remained stably housed while receiving services and only five percent of households had become homeless again one year later.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE Homelessness Prevention

PEOPLE ASSISTED

28,235 People
Received Homelessness
Prevention Assistance



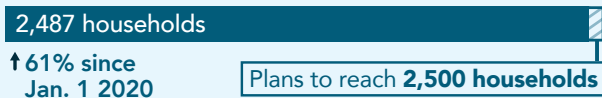
95% of families remained stably housed while receiving services.



ONE YEAR LATER
Only 5% of households became homeless.

EXPANDING OUR SYSTEM

Homelessness Prevention Capacity



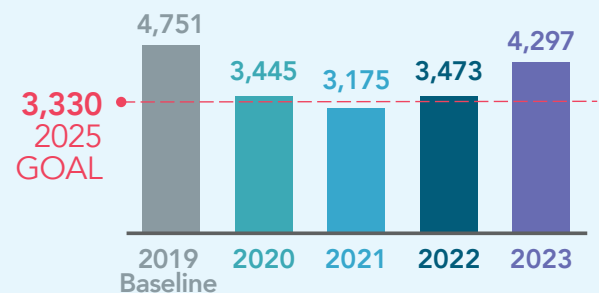
*Total people assisted includes those served via temporary COVID-related financial assistance; outcome stats are for ongoing Homelessness Prevention programs only

Data reflects progress from Jan. 1, 2020 - Dec. 31, 2023

Achieving a 30% reduction in annual inflow of people becoming homeless:

Despite significant progress to reach the goals in our Community Plan, Santa Clara County also saw more people pushed into homelessness than ever in the past year. The number of people experiencing homelessness for the first time jumped by 24 percent in 2023. This increase, coming as rents continue to rise and following the expiration of pandemic-era protections, followed three straight years of gains.

NEW HOUSEHOLDS ENTERING HOMELESSNESS BY YEAR



WHO IS SEEKING HELP?



*Based on 2022 data

The gains made over the past four years are the direct result of close collaboration and continued innovation by our many partners, who together are implementing the multifaceted strategies in the Community Plan to End Homelessness. We must find a way to keep pushing forward on all strategies to end and prevent homelessness, and continue to scale up effective, evidence-based solutions to build on this progress and reduce overall homelessness in our community.

Conclusion

As this report concludes, we reflect on 2023 and how our community came together to address homelessness through innovative and strategic partnerships, sustaining progress to increase the supply of affordable housing in our community, maximizing funding opportunities, and increasing capacity and quality throughout our system.

We housed more people than ever last year, but even more became homeless for the first time. As we move into the final years of the 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness, we must adapt to new challenges while remaining deeply committed to addressing the root causes of homelessness through our strategies. We will:

- Center lived experience in all of our efforts to ensure that our services and systems are person-centered, holistic, and effective;
- Continue building permanent housing that includes deeply affordable and supportive housing units;
- Continue to expand our temporary housing and emergency shelter capacity and crisis response services;
- Sustain and increase our proven homelessness prevention programs that keep people housed; and
- Address the root causes of homelessness through upstream policy and system changes.

As we continue our efforts to end this crisis, we will rely on the collaboration and collective wisdom in our community – including people with lived experience, neighbors, housing and service providers, property owners and managers, grantmakers, elected officials, and both public and private sector partners. We hope you will join us in embracing a more inclusive and abundant future for everyone in our community.



“

These are my people, I get them, I have been where they are, and I am living proof that life can get better.

– Shadia Amador, Supportive Housing Leadership Group